ropean letters, and his reputation as novelist, dramatist, literary critic, and essayist was equaled only by the immense legend built about his name by unscrupulous critics and uncritical admirers, The *Nouvelle Revue Frangaise* he had founded in 1909 had for thirty years occupied the forefront of modern literature, serving as a model for literary reviews in England, Germany, and America and molding literary taste more effectively than had publicity, prizes, and academies. The fifteen volumes of Andre Gide's *OEuvres completes,* though they did not include anything published since 1930, still bore impressive testimony of a full literary life. His influence, perhaps the most widespread in France since that of Baudelaire, had been deeply felt by such Academicians as Jacques de Lacretelle, Francois Mauriac, and Andre Maurois and eagerly accepted by the Nobel prize-winner Roger Martin du Gard besides contributing significantly to the formation of such younger writers as Julien Green, Malraux, Saint Exupery, and Giono. Outside the frontiers, it had touched Aldous Huxley and T. S. Eliot, Rilke, Thomas Mann, and a host of younger writers.

And yet he was not a member of the French Academy; nor did he wear in his buttonhole any of the little ribbons symbolic of national distinction that are so much appreciated in Europe. Honors had begun by fleeing him early in life, he said once, and later he had learned to flee them.

In appearance, too, Andre Gide had changed considerably from the aesthete of the early nineties, and this transformation corresponded to his growth in intellectual stature. In 1939 he was a vigorous, large-boned man who seemed much younger than his age. Long ago, like the hero of *Iflmmoraliste,* he had sacrificed first beard and then mustache because they masked his emotion. The long hair

had likewise yielded to a more modern style and had receded to reveal a noble brow. The firm, attentive eyes were still the striking feature of his face. His long stride and lithe step were those of a young man who would rather walk than ride. His deep, modulated voice, conforming to his precise diction, made one think of an actor or singer. The *lavallidre* necktie had given way to the familiar four-in-hand, and the formal black suit to tweeds of excellent British quality. In fact, his appearance no longer had anything about it specifically marking him as an artist—save perhaps the long rough cape loosely thrown on his shoulders.

The man himself was as devoid of affectation as was his external appearance. Andr6 Gide had traveled widely both throughout the world and within himself, and he had come, oh, what a long way from the fervent, sentimental Andre Walter he had created to serve as the author of his first two books! In the interval he had identified himself with a great many characters, as any creative artist must, but the critics (and his legend) had narrowed that crowd down to but a few: the cynical he-